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ABSTRACT

The editorial pages can be seen as fertile territory for examining female journalists' attitudes and behavior toward topics traditionally considered "women's." To study the numbers, characteristics, attitudes on several women's issues, and behavior in relationship to several women's issues, first a mailing list was compiled from the "1986 Editor and Publisher International Year Book" and the membership list of the National Conference of Editorial Writers. Then, subjects, 120 women (from a group of 192 originally contacted) who provided usable returns, responded to a 50-question survey divided into four sections: "Your Job Responsibilities," "Career Path," "Women's Issues," and "Information about You." Results showed that (1) despite their higher numbers in management and entry level positions on daily newspapers, women are not making significant progress on editorial page staffs; (2) newspapers employing the respondents had generally run editorials on the two selected issues of this study--child care and pay equity--and the majority of the women indicated satisfaction with the consideration of the topics on their editorial pages; (3) the majority of women had written an editorial on child care, a vast majority supported expansion of private care facilities, and a majority supported expansion of governmental facilities; and (4) respondents overwhelmingly noted that the hiring of women on editorial page staffs was either "very important" or "important." (Four tables of data and 36 notes are included.) (MS)

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WOMEN ON EDITORIAL PAGES: CHARACTERISTICS AND ATTITUDES

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WOMEN ON EDITORIAL PAGES: CHARACTERISTICS AND ATTITUDES

The U.S. newspaper work force is now nearly 42 percent female, with newspapers in 1986 hiring more women journalism and mass communications graduates than male.[1] These developments are not surprising, because approximately 60 percent of journalism and mass communications enrollment and graduates are women.[2] With the influx of college-trained women into communications careers, it would seem inevitable that the traditional male dominance of the newsroom would be eroded. Indeed, a recent comprehensive study, The American Journalist, found that 34.4 percent of newsroom staff positions were being held by women.[3]

Assorted studies of women's careers in newspapers have looked at their pay, characteristics, and roles in management. Ogan, Brown, and Weaver, using 1976 staff listings, determined characteristics as well as the number and distribution of women newspaper managers.[4] In 1977 Jurney began yearly tracking of the percentage of women in "directing editorships." The continuation of her project through the National Federation of Press Women showed that 13.03 percent of the "directing editorship" positions were held by women in 1987.[5] Wilson in an exhaustive study of women in various newspaper positions concentrated on pay scales and numbers of women represented in positions ranging from classified ad manager to editor.[6] Sohn looked at the attitudes and achievements of women newspaper managers.[7] Holly focused on

characteristics of male and female editors of weeklies and their attitudes about women in management roles.[8]

Underlying many of these studies of women in management careers is the assumption that women not only deserve equal opportunity in what heretofore has been a male-dominated field, but their success will serve journalism and the community well. As some interviewees in The American Journalist study noted, the increased proportion of females among news staffs has brought "increased sensitivity to news that is of special concern to women and children."[9] Does this "sensitivity apply as well to women who write and edit the opinion on the editorial pages?

For several reasons, editorial writers/editors are an appropriate group to study for evidence of the "sensitivity" of female journalists to so-called "women's issues." First of all, editorial writers/editors are a fairly defined group, with common job responsibilities. A number of them believe they share enough concerns that they have banded together into the National Conference of Editorial Writers, just as managing editors, publishers, investigative reporters, and editors have formed their own groups. Although rarely glamorized, the editorial page writer/editor helps shape what has been called the "conscience" of a newspaper and its "voice" as an institution.[10] In dailies throughout the nation editorial and op ed pages not only cover issues, but also give opinions. Therefore, the editorial pages can be seen as fertile territory for examining female journalists' attitudes and behavior toward topics traditionally considered "women's".

One problem in studying the staffs of editorial pages is the scarcity of women on them. Traditionally, editorial page editors and

writers have been drawn from veteran reporters or copy editors, positions that women have not held in any number until recently.[11] In 1979 an NCEW survey found only 7 percent of respondents were female.[12] Although the 1987 survey conducted by the National Federation of Press Women establishes that 13.03 percent of "directing editors" were female, it identified only 11 percent of editorial page editors as female.[13]

This study holds that female journalists with other job titles such as editorial writer or columnist also have impact on the editorial pages because they serve on the editorial board and write editorials. The inclusion of various job titles under editorial page staff would broaden the opportunity to learn whether or not dailies are making an effort to include women in positions that offer challenge, rewards, and the chance to influence. While not a management position, the editorial writer is an insider, "closer to management than reporters or most subeditors," as MacDougall has noted. In addition to having prestige, the editorial writer has what MacDougall describes as "pleasant work" offering better hours, pay, and working conditions than those of reporters and some editors.[14]

Thus this study of women on editorial pages of daily newspapers has four perspectives:

1) Numbers. As previously noted, not only editors, but editorial page writers, columnists, and editors of assorted titles were sought in the belief that they have influence on the editorial pages. Their numbers should indicate the willingness of dailies to open up positions to women not only in management, but other positions of influence.

2) Characteristics. What are the educational and journalistic backgrounds of women assigned to editorial page responsibilities? What was their career route to their present assignment?

3) Attitudes on several women's issues. Are women in opinion-making roles sympathetic to what might be termed "women's rights" stances on two selected women's issues? If there are differences among the women, do they follow patterns according to such factors as age and job title?

4) Behavior in relationship to several women's issues, as expressed by the respondents' writing editorials on the topics. Are there any defining characteristics of women more likely to write such editorials and take a particular stance?

Information on the last two points may reveal if a group of women journalists are homogeneous in their attitudes on key women's issues, or if any differences relate to factors such as job title or age.

METHOD

The 1986 Editor and Publisher International Year Book was the basic source for a mailing list. However, some newspapers, especially smaller ones, do not list editorial page staffs or editors, so the membership list of the National Conference of Editorial Writers was used as a supplement. The lists originally produced 192 "female" names. The total became 176, when adjusted to the number of respondents who turned out to be male and to the addition of several

women who called to request surveys. Of the 176, there were 128 returns, with 120 usable. (Some women had changed positions or left the field.) Response rate was 72.7 percent.

The 120 respondents usually answered all 50 questions. The printed questionnaire was organized into four sections: "Your Job Responsibilities," "Career Path," "Women's Issues", and "Information about You." For comparison purposes, some questions were drawn from the NCEW's 1979 survey of its membership. Several other questions paralleled those used in The American Journalist study.

NUMBERS AND DISTRIBUTION

While the study aimed at locating every woman who works on an editorial page under various job titles--from editorial writer to columnist--this latitude did not produce as many females as might be expected. The vast majority of women NCEW members were also listed in the 1986 Editor and Publishers International Year Book under "editorial writer, "editorial page editor" and "op page editor." Even with a broad interpretation--that is, including among active "female" staffers those who did not respond to the survey--the proportion of women working on editorial pages to men is approximately 11.4 percent.[15] That is an only slightly higher proportion than the 11 percent of female editorial page editors found in the 1987 study by the National Federation of Press Women. The 11.4 percent is 1.63 percentage points lower than the proportion of women in "directing editorships" in general.

Despite the use of several resources to provide a cross section of women on editorial page staffs, smaller dailies turned out to employ proportionately fewer respondents than did the larger newspapers. A high proportion of respondents--45 percent--represented newspapers with circulation of 100,000 or more, although such larger papers are less than 7 percent of the 1,657 total U.S. dailies in 1986. On the other hand, while dailies with circulation under 50,000 represent nearly 85 percent of the dailies in the U.S., less than 41 percent of the female respondents were employed in this circulation category.[16] The following breaks down respondents' newspapers according to circulation:

CATEGORY	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Under 25,000	26	21.7
25,000-49,999	23	19.2
50,000-99,999	23	19.2
100,000-249,000	19	15.8
250,000 and up	29	24.2*
TOTAL	120	*Total exceeds 100 % because of rounding.

More than 68 percent of the respondents were the lone female on the editorial page staff. But to some degree, women were clustered on certain large dailies. Of the women responding, 18.5 percent worked on staffs with two women. Five percent of the respondents noted three female editorial page writers, and 7.6 percent noted four or more.

The respondents are fairly evenly dispersed according to the

number of dailies in the ten regions as defined by Editor and Publisher. Exceptions are the South and Alaska and Hawaii, with a disproportionate share of responses according to the number of dailies. Somewhat underrepresented are the Pacific states and the New England and Mid-Atlantic states. The respondents according to geographic dispersement are: 16.4 percent from the New England and Mid-Atlantic states (Regions 1 and 2); 23.8 percent, Southern states, (Regions 3 and 4); 33.6 percent, Midwest and North Central (Regions 5 and 7); 15.6 percent, West South Central (Regions 6 and 8); 8.2 percent, Pacific states (Region 9); and 2.5 percent Alaska and Hawaii (Region 10). (Totals exceed 100 percent because of rounding.)

As for the ownership of the newspapers employing the respondents, 30 percent of the women said they work on independent newspapers and 70 percent on group-owned. This result corresponds roughly with the 74 percent of group-owned dailies compared to the 26 percent of independents.[17]

Of the respondents, 66.4 percent devoted 75 percent or more of their time to editorial page responsibilities. The group carried assorted job titles:

WOMEN ON EDITORIAL PAGES--8

TITLE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Editorial writer	39	32.8
Editorial page editor[18]	33	27.7
Associate editor	14	11.8
Editor	11	9.2
"Other" (columnist, deputy page editor, assistant page editor, etc.)	11	9.2
Managing editor	7	5.9
Publisher	3	2.5
Editor and publisher	1	.8*
TOTAL	119*	*Total does not reach 100% because of rounding.

*One person left item blank.

The above breakdown indicates that editorial writers and editorial page editors are 60.5 percent of the respondents. It should be noted the striking difference in circulation patterns in the newspapers employing women in the two job classifications. While 82.3 percent of the page editors worked for papers with less than 100,000 circulation, only 25.6 percent of the editorial writers did. The largest single group of editorial writers (46.2 percent) worked for papers with 250,000 circulation and up, while the largest single group of editorial page editors (44.1 percent) worked for papers with circulation between 25,000-49,999.[19]

CHARACTERISTICS

Predominately, the racial/ethnic identity of the respondents was caucasian; nearly 96 percent so indicated. Only four were black, and one Hispanic. The minority percentages are a slight increase over those found in The American Journalist study, where black journalists were 2.9 percent of the total, Hispanics, .6 percent, and Asian-Americans, .4 percent.[20]

In age, the "baby boom" generation is heavily represented with the median age 39.1 years, compared to the 48.14 median age of respondents to the 1979 NCEW survey.[21] Nearly 72 percent of the women were 45 or younger. Of this "baby boom" group 45.8 percent were between ages 31-40, 13.4 percent age 30 or under, and 12.5 percent between the ages of 41-45. Only 4.2 percent was between ages 46-50. Between the ages of 51-65 were 22.4 percent of the respondents, and 1.7 percent were over age 65.

Married women were 54.2 percent of the respondents. Of the remaining women, 27.1 percent were single, 15.3 percent separated or divorced, and 3.4 percent widowed. But of the age 45 or under group, only 48.8 percent were married, compared to 67.6 percent of those age 46 and over. As for motherhood, the split is about even--49.2 percent did not have children and 50.8 percent did. With younger women less likely to be married than the older group, it follows that the groups lay unequal claim to motherhood. Only 38.4 percent of women age 45 and under noted having children. In contrast, among the women ages 46 and up, 82.4 percent had children.[22]

A college degree was held by 82.4 percent of the women, with the

younger group more likely to be graduates than the older group.[23] Of those ages 45 or younger, 89.5 percent had degrees, while only 64.7 percent of those ages 46 or older did. In college the younger women were somewhat more likely to have majored in journalism or communications; 50 percent did, compared to 45.5 percent of the older group. Humanities such as English, foreign languages or philosophy were the second most common college major, with 26.7 percent of the degrees in this area. Nearly 29 percent of the women have master's degrees and another 22.7 percent at least some graduate work. Three of the women have law degrees.

Nearly 86 percent of the respondents noted expertise in a specific area. These 103 women made 261 notations, or an average of 2.5 each, so the percentages that follow exceed 100 percent. Of the total group, nearly 51 percent marked "government." Next was "education" with 44.2 percent. Third was "women's issues" with 40.8 percent. Science, health and/or environmental expertise was noted by 31.7 percent. Fifth was "minority" issues, with 13.3 percent of the responses, and sixth was "economics/business," with 9.2 percent. Among "other" responses (9.2 percent) were religion, arts, agriculture, energy, law, and Soviet affairs.

Reporting was the first full-time newspaper job for 58.3 percent of the women. Another 14.2 percent started in lifestyle sections, and 7.5 percent were direct hires onto the editorial page. Another 5 percent started on the copy desk, but only .8 percent started as city editor or managing editor. However, 14.2 percent of the respondents started their newspaper career in "other" assignments such as advertising, copy girl, editorial assistant, or photographer.

Their longevity in newspaper work broke down as follows:

Less than 5 years experience---12.5 percent

5-9 years experience ---19.2 percent

10-15 years of experience ---30 percent

16-20 years of experience ---15 percent

21-25 years of experience ---10.8 percent

More than 25 years experience--12.5 percent

With the largest single group of respondents in the category of 10-15 years of general newspaper experience, it follows that 89 percent of respondents have been editorial writers for fewer than ten years. However, 42.5 percent had professional experience in fields outside of newspaper work, with the largest single group of those with such experience--35.3 percent--spending two to four years in non-newspaper professional positions.

The group was hard-working; the largest single segment--48.3 percent--worked 41-50 hours per week on all responsibilities at the newspaper. Another 20.3 percent worked 51-60 hours, and 10.2 percent worked more than 60 hours a week. But 17.8 percent worked 30 to 40 hours a week, while the 3.4 percent who worked less than 30 hours a week can be considered part-timers.

The vast majority--77.5 percent--of the women belong to professional organizations.[24] The 93 noting memberships indicated a total of 121, or nearly 1.3 per respondent. The most common affiliation was with NCEW, noted by 47.5 percent of those with professional memberships. Thirty percent of those with memberships noted the Society of Professional Journalists, and 10 percent indicated membership in Women in Communications, Inc. The American Society of

Newspaper Editors drew 7.5 percent of those with professional memberships, and the Associated Press Managing Editors Association had 5.8 percent. "Other" organizations mentioned by 28 percent of the affiliated respondents included national, state, regional and local press associations. (Multi-answers mean total exceeds 100 percent.)

As a group, the respondents were more likely to identify themselves as "Independents" or Democrats than they were Republican. While 43.1 percent noted "Independent" political status and 42.2 percent noted Democrat, only 13.8 percent gave Republican identification. The Republican allegiance is considerably less than the 34.8 percent of respondents to the 1979 NCEW survey who identified themselves as "Republican" or "leaning toward the Republican Party."[25] A higher proportion of this study's female respondents considered themselves "Independent" than did those in the NCEW study, where 19.1 percent said they "lean toward neither party" and 3.7 percent said they had "other leanings." (In this study only one woman chose "other" as political identification.)[26]

Women ages 45 and younger indicated a strong preference for Democratic identification, with 47 percent in that bracket, and only 9.6 percent Republican. Women 46 and up were more likely to be Republican (24.2 percent), but the Democrats were still a higher percentage, with 30.3 percent of the older women choosing that party.[27] "Independent" was the preference of 42.2 percent of those ages 45 and under, and 45.5 percent of those ages 46 and up.

Job title also makes a difference in political identification. The median age of page editors and editorial writers alike rounds out to 39, so age can not be the factor responsible for

the dramatic difference in the two groups' identification with an "Independent" political stance. While only 25.6 percent of the editorial writers considered themselves "Independents," 60.6 percent of the editorial page editors did. But 59 percent of the editorial writers identified themselves as Democrats, compared to only 33.3 percent of the editorial pages editors. The Republicans have the allegiance of 15.4 percent of the editorial writers, but only 6.1 percent of the editorial page editors.

REWARDS

The average salary of the 120 respondents was approximately $34,500 and the median salary was $33,447.[28] The largest single group of women--24.1 percent--earned in the $30,000 to $34,999 pay bracket. Twenty percent earned less than $25,000, although the group included four who work less than 30 hours a week. A complete breakdown:

Under $20,000	9.2 percent
$20,000-24,999	10.8 percent
$25,000-29,999	13.3 percent
$30,000-34,999	24.2 percent
$35,000-39,999	11.7 percent
$40,000-44,999	10 percent
$45,000-49,999	9.2 percent
$50,000 and up	11.7 percent*

* Total exceeds 100 percent because of rounding.

Age is a factor in pay, but not always as expected. True, the median pay of women age 46 and up is $33,999 compared to $33,332 for

those 45 and younger. Also true is the good showing of women age 46 and up in the $40,000-44,999 bracket occupied by more than 20 percent of the older women and only 5.8 percent of the younger ones. Yet collapsing the two lowest pay categories leaves 23.5 percent of the older women earning less than $25,000 compared to only 18.6 percent of younger women. In the $25,000-29,999 bracket are 14.7 percent of the older women and 12.8 percent of the younger respondents. So while some older women have moved up in salary, others have been left behind in the below $30,000 bracket.

In comparing the pay of the 39 editorial writers to that of the 33 editorial page editors, the group with presumedly the more prestigious title does not necessarily earn more. In fact, the median pay of editorial writers is $37,083, compared to the median pay of $31,071 for page editors. The largest single group of the editorial page editors--27.3 percent--earn under $25,000, while only 10.3 percent of writers are in this category. The editors (18.2 percent) are also more heavily represented in the next lowest pay bracket of $25,000-29,999 occupied by only 5.1 percent of editorial writers. Writers stay ahead of editors until the $50,000 and up bracket, when the two groups are about even, with percentages exceeding 12 percent each.

The differences in pay between the two groups probably relate to the pronounced differences in the circulation of the newspapers employing them and consequently editorial staff size.[29] As noted, editorial writers tend to work for newspapers with more than 100,000 circulation, while page editors were on smaller papers. Because pay scale may vary with years of experience, job title, circulation of the newspaper, region, unionization, and other factors, the respondents'

perception of fairness of their pay may shed more light on equity than the pay itself. This study used the NCEW question, "How do you believe your salary compares to that of other staff members on your newspaper with similar education and experience?" The majority of respondents expressed satisfaction, with 31.7 percent saying their pay compared "very well"; 37.5 percent saying it compared "well"; 22.5 percent "average"; 7.5 percent "poorly" and .8 percent "very poorly." [30]

Some of the responses in the compares "poorly" category came from editorial page editors, who, as noted previously, were heavily represented in the group earning below $25,000. Of the editors, 18.2 percent ranked their pay as comparing "poorly." On the other hand, 33.3 percent of the editors ranked their pay as comparing "very well" and 33.3 percent "well." Another 15.2 percent ranked it as "average." The editorial writers came up with a resounding 71.8 percent in the "very well" and "well" categories, although they were more likely to answer "well" (46.2 percent) than "very well" (25.6 percent). Another 25.6 percent of writers thought their pay "average" in comparison to that of others. While no page editors selected "very poorly", one writer did so.

Only $667 ahead of younger women in median salary, older women were more likely to equate their pay as "average" when compared to those of others' at the newspaper. Of those age 46 and up, 29.4 percent said their pay was "average" compared to 19.8 of the younger women who noted "average." While 61.8 percent of older women ranked their pay as comparing "very well" or "well," 72.1 percent of the younger women's answers fell into those categories. Of the younger

women, 8.1 percent said their pay compared "poorly" or "very poorly." Of older women, 8.8 percent said their pay compared "poorly".

In general, respondents indicated satisfaction with their editorial page assignments; 55.9 percent rated their work "very satisfying" and 35.6 percent said it was "satisfying." Only 7.6 percent described their work as "not very satisfying" and .8 percent said it was "not at all" satisfying.[31] Indeed, 77.8 percent said they planned on remaining an editorial writer, with only 17.9 percent saying they intended to seek a change of assignment and 4.3 percent responding that they weren't sure.

Asked how frequently they were compelled to express ideas contrary to their own in editorials, 40.2 percent noted "never," 35.9 percent "seldom," 22.2 percent "sometimes," and 1.7 percent "most of the time."[32] In fact, 20.2 percent have "total control" in the selection of topics of editorials; 65.5 percent "a great amount" of influence; 10.1 percent "some" influence; 3.4 percent "a little" influence, and .8 percent "no influence."

WOMEN'S ISSUES

The survey included a section centered on two "women's issues"--child care for children of employed parents and pay equity (also known as comparable worth). The issues were limited in number because the survey could not possibly accommodate the range of topics commonly perceived as "women's."[33] The care of children outside the home and pay equity were selected as timely, significant issues and representative of both domestic and career interests of women. Both

are issues of concern to such women's rights groups as the National Organization for Women and the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues. NOW, for instance, passed a resolution at its 1987 conference supporting "full public funding of early childhood education/child care" and calling for passage of legislation which would "provide for comprehensive child care for families of all income levels throughout the country."[34] The Caucus, in giving child care its "uppermost priority" in 1987, set out to recognize innovative employer and community programs.[35] Child care advocacy, then, has often focused on improvement of facilities through governmental assistance and/or private sector programs.

The second issue, pay equity, is a more radical approach to improving women's salaries than that of equal pay. While the latter means equal pay for equal work--a concept which today brooks little opposition--pay equity would equalize pay of "male" and "female" jobs of "comparable worth." Pay equity has been called "the issue of '80s" in the employment area and has drawn the support of women's rights organizations.[36]

Instead of seeking only the respondents' opinions on the two issues, this survey also aimed at finding out if the editorial pages had printed opinions, including editorials on each topic, and if the respondent had written any of the editorials. If the respondent had written an editorial, her stance was solicited. Thus behavior, as well as attitudes, were sought.

The first question in the series on child care began: "In the last two years has your newspaper published any editorial(s) on the care of children of employed parents"? (The two-year time frame was

chosen to limit the memory requested and to include more newcomers.) A vast majority of the women--87.4 percent--said yes. The "no's" were 10.1 percent, with the remainder, 2.5 percent, in the "don't know" category.

Asked to evaluate how important it is that "the editorial pages consider the care of children of employed parents," 53.3 percent of the respondents considered it "very important." Another 32.5 percent considered it "important," 12.5 percent ranked it "not very important" and 1.7 percent "not at all important."

The respondents were asked to respond with various degrees of agreement or disagreement to the statement: "Care of children of employed parents has been adequately considered in your editorial pages/op ed pages through editorials and other material." The question left room for commentary by columnists, letter writers, cartoonists, etc., as well as by the editorial page staff. While only 9.4 percent of the respondents expressed "strong" agreement with the statement, "agreement" came from 47.9 percent. A neutral position was taken by 24.8 percent; 12.8 percent disagreed and 5.1 percent strongly disagreed.

Perhaps one reason that the majority of women were satisfied with their pages' consideration of child care is that many--nearly 64 percent--have written an editorial on the subject. As noted previously, a large majority of the respondents (76.1 percent) had indicated they "seldom" or "never" wrote editorials contrary to their own beliefs. Also, 85.7 percent noted they had "total control" or a "great amount" of influence over the topics of editorials. So the editorials, for the most part, should reflect the respondents'

interests and views.

The 76 women who wrote an editorial on child care were asked to give their stance. They were permitted to check more than one approach, so totals exceed 100 percent. The most common stance was support of the expansion of the private sector child care, advocated by 81.6 percent of the respondents who wrote an editorial on child care. Favoring expansion of governmental programs was 64.5 percent. The women weren't uniformly in support of child care programs; 10.5 percent opposed governmental expansion, and 3.9 percent opposed expansion in the private sector. Advocated by 22.4 percent of the respondents were "other" approaches ranging from simply a summary of day care options to the need for licensing of facilities.

Although the respondents showed differences in attitude about child care, the vast majority considered it an important issue. But pay equity, or as some respondents noted, "comparable worth," elicited less interest. When asked "In the last two years, has your newspaper printed any editorials on pay equity?", the "don't know's" were a higher percentage of answers than for child care. For pay equity, 7.6 percent of the women "didn't know" compared to only 2.5 percent for child care. The percentage of those saying that their newspapers had printed an editorial on pay equity was lower than for child care--76.3 percent compared to 87.4 percent for child care.

In general, the women did not consider pay equity as important as child care, which 53.3 percent of women ranked as "very important". Only 27.1 percent of women so ranked pay equity. The majority of responses--56.8 percent--put it in the "important" category. "Not very important" was the response of 14.4 percent of the women, and 1.7

percent ranked it as "not at all important."

Respondents were asked to rank their attitude--from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree"--to the statement that "pay equity has been considered adequately in your editorial/op ed pages through editorials and other material." In comparison to the parallel child care question, pay equity drew more women into the "disagree" or "strongly disagree" categories--27.4 percent for pay equity compared to 17.9 percent for child care. At the other extreme, only 7.7 percent of the respondents "strongly agreed" with the paper's consideration of pay equity, while 9.4 percent "strongly agreed" with the child care approach. In the "agree" category for pay equity was the largest group with 41.9 percent. Another 23.1 percent were "neutral", parallel to the 24.8 percent of "neutrals" in the child care section.

A lower percentage of women--49.2 percent--had written an editorial on pay equity than about child care, a topic for 64 percent of the women. Of the 59 women who said they had written an editorial on pay equity, 67.8 percent suppported pay equity and 28.8 percent opposed it. Another 3.4 percent took "other" stances.

In a summary of the responses to questions on the two issues, it should be noted that the degree of importance designated for a topic seems to correlate with the likelihood that respondents had written about it. That is, child care was a "very important" topic to more respondents than was pay equity, and more respondents had written an editorial about child care than had about pay equity. Those who wrote editorials supported expansion of child care programs more than they supported pay equity. Respondents expressed more dissatisfaction with the consideration of pay equity on their pages than they did with

child care.

RELATIONSHIP OF AGE AND JOB TITLE

As already indicated, age makes some difference in respondents' characteristics and political identification. Does it also make a difference in attitudes and behavior on the two selected women's issues?

It does as far as intensity in attitude toward the editorial pages' consideration of the issues. Most respondents in each age group saw child care as either "very important" or "important," but they differ in degree. While 60.5 percent of the age 45 and younger group thought it "very important" that the editorial page consider the care of children of employed parents, only 35.3 percent of the age 46 and up saw the issue as "very important."

A higher percentage (15.6 percent) of the older group is in "strong agreement" that the consideration of child care on the editorial page is adequate; only 7.1 percent of those age 45 and younger thought so. Indeed, 21.2 percent of the younger group either "disagreed" or "strongly disagreed" with the coverage, compared to only 9.4 percent of the older women.

While a somewhat higher percentage of older women had written an editorial about child care (66.7 to 62.8 percent), the older writers were less likely to support the expansion of child care programs. Only 50 percent of the older women's editorials favored expansion through governmental programs, while 70.4 percent of the younger women's

editorials took such a view. The older women were also more likely to have written in opposition to governmental child care programs--13.6 percent did, compared to 9.3 percent of younger women. As far as private sector expansion of child care, age did not make a difference; more than 81 percent of each group supported it in an editorial.

On the pay equity issue, the pattern reverses. Older women show more concern with the issue and are more supportive of the concept. However, the differences in attitudes are not as pronounced in the two groups as it is about child care and generally fall in the five percent range. For instance, 31.3 percent of older women see pay equity as "very important," compared to 25.6 percent of the younger women. However, the older group does show notably more satisfaction with the consideration of pay equity on the editorial pages; 15.2 percent are in "strong agreement" compared to only 4.8 percent of the younger women.

A somewhat higher percentage of older women than younger had written an editorial on pay equity. Among the age 46 and up group, 52.9 percent had written such an editorial, compared to 47.7 percent of the younger women. Of those who did write editorials, the percentage of the older group supportive of pay equity was higher; 77.8 percent of the older women supported pay equity compared to 63.4 percent of younger women.

Even more marked in their differences in attitude and behavior on the two selected issues are women in two distinct job categories--editorial writer and editorial page editor. As noted, editorial page editors tend to work for smaller dailies, while most writers are on dailies with circulation of 100,000 and above. The two groups also differ in political identification, with the editors

tending more toward "Independent" status. With some different characteristics, it is not surprising that the two groups show differences in attitudes and behavior toward the two women's issues.

Representing as they do larger newspapers, editorial writers were more likely to respond that their paper had published an editorial on child care; 94.7 percent of the editorial writers so noted, compared to 84.8 percent of the editorial page editors. Of the editorial writers, 66.7 percent said the topic was "very important," a response of only 51.5 percent of the editorial page editors. Among the editors, 15.2 percent said the topic was "not very important," a response of only 5.1 percent of writers. To the question seeking attitude about their editorial page's consideration of child care, the page editor was more likely to be neutral than the editorial writer. More than 36 percent of the editors selected "neutral" compared to 21.1 percent of editorial writers. Of the editors, 48.5 percent either "strongly agreed" or "agreed" with their page's coverage of child care. Of the editorial writers, an even higher percentage--57.9 percent--strongly agreed or agreed, but 21.1 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed with their page's consideration, compared to only 15.1 percent of page editors.

The two groups were similar in the percentage of members who had written an editorial about child care; 69.2 percent of editorial writers had, compared to 66.7 percent of editorial page editors. However, the stance of the editorials was not the same. While 77.8 percent of the editorial writers' editorials favored expansion of child care facilities through governmental programs, only 54.5 percent of the editorial page editors took that position. No writer's editorials opposed expansion through governmental programs--two page editors'

editorials did. Writers were more likely to support private sector expansion in their editorials; 88.9 percent did, compared to only 68.2 percent of the editors. Indeed, the editorial page editors' stance in this area is considerably below the overall tally of 81.6 percent of support for private sector expansion of child care facilities.

On the issue of pay equity, the editorial writers' papers again were more likely to have published an editorial on the topic; 86.8 percent had, compared to 69.7 percent of editorial page editors' papers. Of the writers, 92.1 percent rated pay equity as either "very important" or "important," but only 71.9 percent of editorial page editors did. Of the editors, 28.1 percent perceived it as "not very important," but only 5.3 percent of writers agreed. Another 2.6 percent of writers took the extreme of seeing pay equity as "not at all important." No editorial page editor made that judgment.

As far as their agreement with the adequacy of the consideration of pay equity on their pages, the editors were more satisfied, perhaps because they didn't consider the issue as important as do the writers. Collapsing the "strongly agree" and "agree" categories, 54.6 percent of the page editors were in agreement with their page's consideration, while only 41.1 percent of writers were. The writers were more likely to be in the "disagree" or "strongly disagree" categories; 35.9 percent of them were, compared to 24.2 percent of editors.

By a 48.7 percent to 45.5 percent margin, writers proved somewhat more likely to have written an editorial about pay equity than the editorial page editors. Of the writers who wrote such an editorial, 78.9 percent favored pay equity. Of the editorial page editors writing an editorial on the topic, 66.7 percent were in support.

ATTITUDE ABOUT WOMEN ON EDITORIAL PAGES

One question that was designed to indicate respondents' attitude toward women's employment on the editorial pages was phrased, "How important do you believe it is that women be employed as editorial writers/editors?" Of the respondents in general, 65.8 percent of them ranked female employment as "very important," 30 percent as "important," 2.5 percent as "not very important," and 1.7 percent, "not at all important."

What might be called a feminist orientation, as reflected in the answers, varies to some degree with age and job title. But the differences between older and younger women were within the five percent range. The writers and editorial page editors showed more differences in response to this question than did the two age groups. Of the writers, 82.1 percent said female employment was "very important," but only 66.7 percent of page editors agreed. The remainder of each group categorized female employment as "important."

CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions may be made from this study of 120 women who work on editorial pages:

1) Despite their higher numbers in management and entry level positions on daily newspapers, women are not making significant progress, percentage-wise on editorial page staffs. The percentage of females on editorial page staffs can be estimated at 11.4 percent. A majority of the women in this survey say they are the only member of their sex on the editorial page staff.

2) Larger newspapers (over 100,000 circulation) are hiring women as editorial writers or in equivalent titles, while the management title of editorial page editor is most often held by women working on smaller newspapers, particularly those in the 25,000 to 49,999 circulation bracket.

3) Although women with the title of "editorial writer" or "editorial page editor" encompassed more than 60 percent of the respondents, the women with editorial page responsibilities also carried such titles as associate editor, managing editor, publisher, and editor. Predominately, the women were caucasian, college graduates, married, but if younger, without children. Median age was about 39 years. They tended to consider themselves either "Independent" or "Democrat." In age and political leanings alone, the respondents could offer a different perspective to the editorial pages than male staffers who have tended to be older and more Republican, according some findings.

4) The majority of the respondents had started on newspapers as reporters, but the showing of lifestyle staffers and hires directly onto the editorial page indicates some flexibility in newspapers' attitudes about the appropriate background for editorial page staffers. The women tended to indicate they were experts in subject areas and belonged to at least one professional organization. Median salary was $33,447, and the majority of respondents said they thought their pay compared favorably with others on their newspaper who had comparable responsibilities and experience. However, the lower pay and lower pay satisfaction of some editorial page editors should be noted.

5) A large majority of women were satisfied with their work on

editorial pages, and few indicated the desire to leave it. The majority said they seldom or never wrote editorials against their will, and an even larger percentage said they had, at a minimum, "a great amount" of influence over the selection of topics for editorials.

6) Newspapers employing the respondents had generally run editorials on the two selected issues--child care and pay equity. The majority of women indicated satisfaction with the consideration of the topics on their editorial pages. However, the respondents were not enthusiastic about the consideration of the issues on their pages, and a noteworthy minority indicated dissatisfaction with their pages' consideration of the issues. Respondents were more likely to disagree with the adequacy of their newspapers' consideration of pay equity than with child care.

7) In expressing their attitudes about the two issues, the respondents generally ranked child care and pay equity as important, although more interest was demonstrated in child care.

8) The majority of women had written an editorial on child care, and a vast majority supported expansion of private care facilities and a majority supported expansion of governmental facilities. Not quite half of the women had written an editorial about pay equity, although a majority of those writing such an editorial supported the concept.

9) Respondents overwhelmingly noted that the hiring of women on editorial page staffs was either "very important" or "important."

10) The respondents, however, were not carbon copies of each other in attitudes and behavior regarding the issues presented. Some different patterns according to age and job title could be discerned. Younger women were more concerned about child care and older women

about pay equity, for instance. Editorial writers tended to have more defined views than editorial page editors, who tended to be more "neutral" on the issues and claim an "independent" political stance.

Whether the position shapes the job-holder or whether women of certain characteristics attain editorial page editorships, particularly on smaller papers, is beyond the scope of this study. Further study could explore why women on editorial pages think their presence is important and how they interact with members of the editorial board should views on women's issues conflict.

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NOTES

[1]American Newspaper Publishers Association, '87 Facts About Newspapers, April 1987, p. 20.

[2]Paul V. Peterson, "Enrollment Up 7 Percent in '86, Outstripping University Growth," Journalism Educator 42 (Spring 1987): 4.

[3]David H. Weaver and G. Cleveland Wilhoit, The American Journalist (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), p. 21.

[4]Christine L. Ogan, Charlene J. Brown and David H. Weaver, "Characteristics of Managers of Selected U. S. Daily Newspapers," Journalism Quarterly 56 (Winter 1979): 803-809.

[5]Jean Gaddy Wilson, "Only 68 Years to Go," Press Woman 51 (January 1988): 1-3.

[6]Wilson, "Special Report," presstime 8 (October 1986): 31-35.

[7]Ardyth B. Sohn, "Goals and Achievement Orientations of Women Newspaper Managers," Journalism Quarterly 61 (Autumn 1984): 600-605.

[8]Susan Holly, "Women in Management of Weeklies," Journalism Quarterly 56 (Winter 1979): 810-815.

[9]Weaver and Wilhoit, The American Journalist, p. 166.

[10]For views on the "conscience" and "voice" roles of the editorial pages see Curtis D. MacDougall, Principles of Editorial Writing (Dubuque, Iowa: William C. Brown Publishers, 1973), pp. 4-8, and Harry W. Stonecipher, Editorial and Persuasive Writing (New York: Hastings House Communication Arts Books, 1979), pp. 8-35.

[11]In the late 1960s Ben H. Bagdikian described the editorial page staffs as changing, but only slowly, from the tradition of newspapers' using positions there as "a substitute for a pension plan." Bagdikian said that the pages had been "a company-paid nursing home for geriatric cases." See Bagdikian, "Editorial Pages Change--But Too Slowly," The Masthead 19 (Summer 1967): 96-100.

[12]G. Cleveland Wilhoit and Dan G. Drew, "Profile of the North American Editorial Writer, 1971-1979," The Masthead 31 (Winter 1979-80): 8.

[13]Wilson, "Only 68 Years to Go," p. 3.

[14]MacDougall, Principles of Editorial Writing, p. 13.

[15]NCEW's membership list provided 27 female names not listed in the 1986 Editor and Publisher Year Book. In making the 11.4 percent estimate, however, the author divided only the female names listed in the Year Book by the total listings for editorial writers, page editors, and opinion editors.

[16]American Newspaper Publishers Association, '87 Facts About Newspapers, p. 4.

[17]Mary A. Anderson, "Ranks of Independent Newspapers Continue to Fade," presstime 9 (August 1987): 17.

[18]According to Wilson in "Only 68 Years to Go, 11 percent of editorial page editors are women and there are 48 female "editorial chiefs" throughout the nation. But the latter title includes "chief of the editorial board, editorial page chair, editorial director, editorial supervisor, editor of editorial page, chief editorial writer." (pp. 2 and 4)

[19]Wilson in "Only 68 Years to Go" reports that small dailies with 10,000 to 50,000 circulation have the highest proportion of female editorial page editors--15 percent. At newspapers with circulation of 250,000 or more the proportion is only about 7 percent. (p.3)

[20]Weaver and Wilhoit, The American Journalist, p. 23.

[21]Wilhoit and Drew, "Profile of the North American Editorial Writer, 1971-1979," p. 9.

[22]Other research parallels this study's findings that younger female journalists are less likely than comparable groups to be married and have children. Weaver and Wilhoit found that only 42 percent of female journalists were married, compared to 62 percent of the males. While 75 percent of men had children, only 65 percent of women did. See The American Journalist, p. 20. Sohn in her study of 59 female newspaper managers found that 56 percent were single and 71 percent childless. See "Goals and Achievement Orientations of Women Newspaper Managers," pp. 603-4. Ogan, Brown, and Weaver noted that the women newspaper managers surveyed were less likely to have a spouse, and that only about 56 percent had children, compared to about 90 percent of the men. See "Characterics of Managers of Selected U.S. Daily Newspapers," p. 805.

[23]The educational level of the female respondents compares favorably with that of journalists surveyed in other studies. NCEW's 1979 survey found 83 percent of respondents had baccalaureate degrees. See Wilhoit and Drew, "Profile of the North American Editorial Writer, 1971-1979," p. 9. Several years later, The American Journalist survey found that 74.4 percent of journalists on daily newspapers were college graduates. (p. 48)

[24]In "Profile of the North American Editorial Writer, 1971-1979," Wilhoit and Drew report that 61.1 percent of respondents belonged to professional journalism societies. (p. 13)

[25]Wilhoit and Drew, "Profile of the North American Editorial Writer, 1971-1979," p. 12.

[26]The respondents' identification with the Democratic Party corresponds with Ogan, Brown, and Weaver's findings that female newspaper managers were more likely to identify themselves as Democrats than were male managers. See "Characteristics of Managers of Selected U.S. Daily Newspapers," p. 806.

In their "Independent" preference, the women in this study are in line with patterns of journalists in general. Weaver and Wilhoit cite in their The American Journalist study a trend among journalists "toward the center of the political spectrum." (pp. 30 and 32)

[27]Wilhoit and Drew note in reporting on the 1979 NCEW survey results that "older editorial writers are likelier to say they are Republican or leaning that way than are the younger respondents, who are likelier to be Democrats." See "Profile of the North American Editorial Writer, 1971-1979," p. 12.

[28]Wilson found male editorial page editors had an average salary of $35,777 (median was $31,720) compared to the $25,840 average salary for the female editorial page editors, whose median salary was $23,140. See p. 34 of Wilson's "Special Report." However, this study included job titles other than "editorial page editor" and so its salary findings may be more comparable to the NCEW 1979 survey, in which those working on editorial pages had a median salary of $24,000. An update of the NCEW survey would provide more accurate comparisons, however. See Wilhoit and Drew, "Profile of the North American Editorial Writer, 1971-1979," p. 9.

[29]Weaver and Wilhoit in The American Journalist note that years of experience and editorial staff size are the two strongest predictors of salary, although other factors are involved, including region and unionization. See p. 85.

[30]Respondents in the 1979 NCEW survey were less likely to be in the compares "poorly" category and more likely in the "very well" or "well" brackets than the women in this study. The comparisons:

Compares:	NCEW SURVEY (percent)	WOMEN'S SURVEY (percent)
"Very well"	33.3	31.7
"Well"	41.5	37.5
"Average"	22.2	22.5
"Poorly"	2.5	7.5
"Very poorly"	.3*	.8

*From Wilhoit and Drew, "Profile of the North American Editorial Writer, 1971-1979," p. 10.

[31]Weaver and Wilhoit in The American Journalist note that "gender makes no difference in job satisfaction," although a decade ago male journalists expressed lower job satisfaction than females did. Weaver and Wilhoit's study also found that older reporters expressed more job satisfaction than younger ones. (p. 92) Whether because they were older or other factors, respondents to the 1979 NCEW survey expressed a somewhat higher degree of job satisfaction than did the women surveyed for this study:

Degree of satisfaction:	NCEW SURVEY (percent)	WOMEN'S SURVEY (percent)
Very satisfying	68.4	55.9
Satisfying	28.9	35.6
Not very satisfying	2.5	7.6
Very unsatisfying	.2*	.8

*From Wilhoit and Drew, "Profile of the North American Editorial Writer, 1971-1979," p. 11.

[32]In noting how often they were compelled to express ideas contrary to their own in editorials, respondents to NCEW's 1979 scored a lower percentage in the "some of the time" category than did the women in this study. While 14.6 percent of the NCEW respondents believed they had to write editorials contrary to their own ideas "some of the time," 22.2 percent of the women in this study thought they did. The two groups were about even in the "never" category, but a higher percentage of NCEW respondents (44.4 percent) fell into the "seldom" category, compared to 35.9 percent of the women in this survey. See Wilhoit and Drew, "Profile of the North American Editorial Writer, 1971-1979," p. 10.

[33]Considered as part of the "women's issue beat" are "political participation, health, education, insurance, reproductive freedom, battered persons, vocational training, government training programs, displaced homemakers, military service, sports, welfare, food stamps, child care, Women Infants and Children (WIC), divorce support payments, support enforcement, inheritance laws, rape, taxation, business, employment in non-traditional jobs and social security." The list is from "Women's Beat Specialists Needed," A Newspaper Study...New Directions for News, Women's Studies Program and Policy Center, George Washington University, Washington, D.C., 1983, p. 4.

[34]"Resolutions Passed at 1987 National NOW Conference," National Now Times, 20 (July/August 1987): 14.

[35]"Caucus Launches Child Care Challenge of 1987," Update, Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues, 7 (September 30, 1987): 1.

[36]"Pay Equity--An Emerging Issue," A Newspaper Study...New Directions for News, p. 21.